

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

AUGUST, 1975

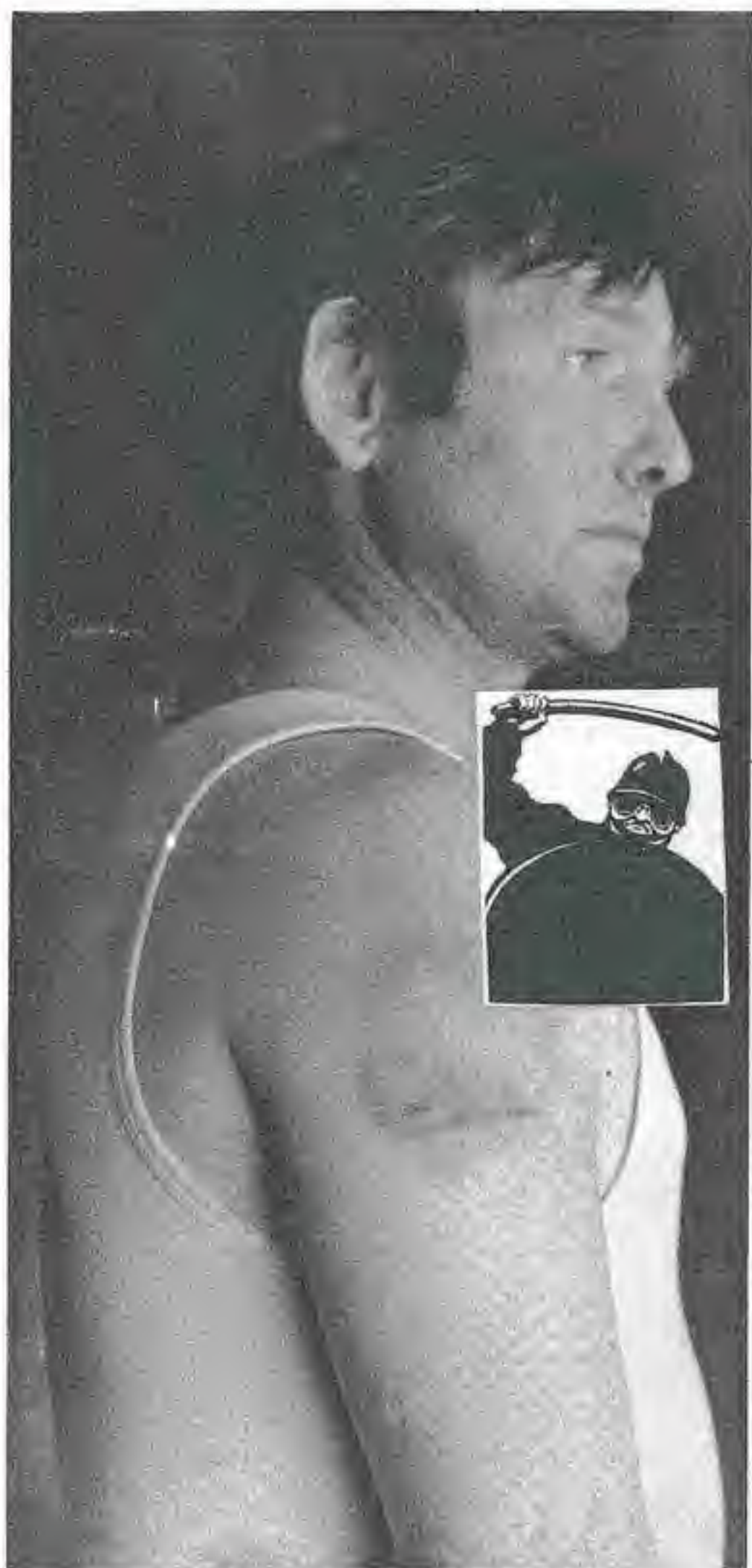
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VOL. 3, NO. 8

**THE  
VOICE  
OF THE  
WORKER**

That which is good for the working class - I esteem patriotic. - *James Connolly*

## Assault at Garda Station



## Helen Buckley's America



# We're not so dumb!

BY DERMOT MCEVOY

I TRUST you are as disturbed as I am about the charges of gross ill-treatment by members of the Special Branch of the Garda Siochana of Michael Murphy, a Limerick Businessman. The *Limerick Leader*, which isn't what you'd call a radical newspaper these days, devoted two columns to Murphy's account of what happened to him: 15 hours of interrogation by relays of detectives, regular thumpings on the chest, beating with a heavy lump of wood (I saw his bruised arm) and threats of worse to come. If half of what Michael Murphy alleges is true, there is a defiance of definitive law by the Gardai which is a disgrace to a civilised society, particularly to one which, in theory, sets great store on by the freedom of the citizen and the equality of all before the law, including the policeman. This story, of a dusk to dawn interrogation has points of similarity with Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, echoes of Solzhenitsyn and *Crime and Punishment*.

My own attitude was not to believe Murphy, that I would not pursue this *affaire* farther until I had studied the official Garda reply. Does the Superintendent who has official responsibility for the conduct of Limerick City Garda stations read the *Leader*? Does his Chief Superintendent? Does the Minister for Justice? Yet there has been no reply, and no follow-up by the *Leader*. THE PEOPLE OF LIMERICK DEMAND A REPLY!

If the local Garda chiefs have been ordered not to reply, such an order is monstrous. There can be no public confidence in a peace-keeping force that lets these charges go unchallenged. I've no brief for the IRA in any of its factions; I detest the lot of them, but none of them is deserving of the mistreatment that Michael Murphy alleges. If the Special Branch thinks Murphy is a member of the IRA, it has a right, even a duty, to arrest him and have him brought before the Special Criminal Court, it has no right to beat him up, and that's what we must believe happened until the Limerick Superintendent takes time off to repudiate Murphy's statement. If what Murphy alleges is true, the Superintendent should resign, with a change of Government he might not get such a soft option. The liberties of the people of Limerick, socialist and anti-socialist, are at stake. So don't let this challenge to them go by default; it could be YOUR turn next.

Why even the late and unlamented Fitzgerald-Kenney invented a cow that kicked the bruised prisoners of his day, knowing in a way that he cared for public opinion. Meanwhile, show your own disapproval of this contemptuous silence by a refusal to co-operate with the local Gardai, decline any social contact with them apart from telling them you are waiting for a statement from their Superintendent. Like myself, you do not need a commitment to Michael Murphy or his friends to take that very simple and effective stand. We'll insist on an answer!

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IT WAS heartening to see such a big crowd in the Limerick I.T.G.W.U. hall for That Second Channel meeting addressed by Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien, the Multi-Channel Committee members, the pro-RTE2 men and Gerry Collins T.D. Steve Coughlan just as he was in the Dail earlier that day, was speechless, but Mayor Thady (how did he get into the chair by the way?) got the maximum publicity for the family and assessing the temper of the meeting, shrewdly sided with the BBC1 lobby. I thought though he was less than fair to Noel Browne of Caherdavin who put in all the spade work for the Limerick Branch of the Multi-Channel Committee, but that's politics and, if you're thinking of taking over the family Dail seat, it is no harm to grab all the favourable publicity you can when dealing with red-necks who might not humble you as a Johnny-come-lately.

Des O'Malley whose seat must be considered more than

shaky did not contribute to the debate, too worried no doubt about the delay in making fornication a crime and the setting up of the Purity Police such a foray would involve. The meeting, too, was deprived of the wisdom of Bobby Molloy, former Shadow Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, but then he'd have been too busy refusing to recognise some Tribunal or other which was, however, welcomed by his leader, Jack Lynch. Always assuming, of course, that land-and-rumour-developers like Molloy recognise any leader — except Money.

Limerick's attitude was clear: it preferred BBC1 as a second channel to any extension of RTE. If I had the ill-fortune to live in Limerick, home of tired and pricey vegetables, I'd have pressed harder for costings of multi-channel re-broadcasts; BBC1, since the advent of commercial television, has degenerated from the Reithian standard. Take it from me and I live in a multi-channel piped-reception area, it's not all that cop. The best of BOTH BBC channels and of ITV gives a fair choice for most tastes. So watch what you may be asked to vote for. See that you are not absolutely committed, at any rate, for not too long ahead.

Mind you, you have not got that second channel yet. I, personally, am not going to oppose you but viewers like myself in the multi-channel areas are on the alert. Long before Conor Cruise O'Brien's campaign to confine the choice — RTE2 or BBC1 — to the single-channel areas got swinging, I could see he was fudging the real issue. O'Brien mentioned it almost casually at Limerick — the licence will be £6 more! Well, you're grown up enough to realise that £6 today will be £10 next day and that fellows like me will be screaming about "taxation without representation". So there can be a negative reaction to the Ministers' electric thinking. Just mull it over and you'll see the reasonableness of the opposition.

By an accident of geography, Dublin and much of the East Coast have been able to pirate multi-channel reception from the air waves, a trick that hasn't actually cost Limerick, Cork, Galway, or the Minister for Finance a penny piece. The pirates, however, have had to pay for the privilege. The £100, plus insurance and erection costs, of a suitable aerial or, like myself, an extra £13 a year to a State subsidiary, a relay service to help on the piracy, is by no means all. Any estate agent will tell you that a house in a multi-channel area costs at least 25 per cent more to buy and there are extra rates to the local authority, not to mention ground rent. (In my own case, my ground landlord, an Irishman, lives permanently on the French Riviera. His only contribution to the Irish economy is to have the *Irish Times* airmailed to him every day. Shades of those dreadful English absentee landlords who guzzled port in the clubs of St. James's!).

Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien has, so far, said nothing about a differentiated licence fee. It is St. Alphonsus's to a hayseed that if the second-channel agitation is successful, I and tens of thousands like me will be called on to pay £6 or £10 more a year so that you can be entertained either by BBC1 or RTE2. Offhand, I can think of better ways to spend my money.

Multi-channel Dublin isn't all that fortunate. The Liffey is a stinking sewer and Dublin Bay from Portmarnock to Greystones is choked with industrial slurry; kids can't paddle at once — lovely Killiney without slipping on solid human sewage. (The McInerneys, the Beltons and their ilk were not called on to pay a Development Tax that would provide proper sewage outlets for the tens of thousands of new houses they made millions on — with ground rents to copperbottom their investment). Moreover, "geographically fortunate" Dublin largely generates the money that pays the *deontas* to

all those impoverished farmers who'll rush to buy colour TV sets when the second channel comes.

These *deontas-gatherers* should pay for their fun if they're not satisfied with the jigs and reels of RTE1. Why these very people who want Dublin to subsidise them are howling like stuck pigs at the Government proposal to take back a small fraction of their latest EEC bonus to subsidise the urban dwellers' milk and bread! Cheek! No wonder Fianna Fail did not mention a second channel in all their years of office. For this vote-catcher in the West and South can be a vote-loser in The Pale.

I like Conor Cruise O'Brien politically, his liberal outlook, his courage, his unequivocal stand on the North. He may fudge the second channel issue in Ballymuck and get away with it, but he doesn't con me. To my slight regret I have no degrees after my name but a horse fair tangler by name of Geoghegan Mahony (greybeards in Limerick and Ennis will remember him) long ago and far away paid me this compliment: "You know your geogistry". So come off it, Minister! In the jargon of the day, tell it as it is: Dublin will have to pay for Limerick. My reply: Will do, but how about a *deontas* for the poor of, say Clontarf?

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SERIOUSLY, I believe that Limerick and much of Ireland are deprived in this matter of communications. People, for instance, are unable to receive BBC Radio 3 and will have missed a masterly broadcast on *Dogma and Reason in Ireland* by Lord Ashby, Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast, and Master of Clare College, Cambridge. This broadcast by Ashby, a biologist, gives a new (to many) twist to the deep undercurrent of incompatibility between North and South. He claims it is *tribal*: "To put it in biological terms, it has its roots in genetic differences between two strains of *homo sapiens*: the Celts and the Anglo-Saxons .. In ancient times, the two races were kept genetically separate by the Irish Sea. Since the Reformation, the churches, by frowning upon intermarriage between the two races, have kept the genes apart".

He goes on: "This genetic incompatibility is the tragedy of Ulster; a genuine tragedy, for neither side is altogether right, nor altogether wrong". Seeing so many individual families getting on well together, Lord Ashby admits he could not understand why they did not get on together collectively, until he came across a sentence in Cardinal Newman's writings: "Deductions have no power of persuasion; many a man will live and die upon a dogma .. no man will be martyr for a conclusion". Ashby's melancholy dissection of our situation *vis-a-vis* the North: "There is no *solution* to the Irish question (at any rate, no solution which would not be repugnant in a democracy); there is only *accommodation* to it. Adaptations are, by their nature, never permanently stable, but they do confer periods of stability on the co-existence of two incompatible strains of *homo sapiens*".

If you feel you have heard echoes of this before, you have. For much of it has been said in Conor Cruise O'Brien's *States of Ireland*. No harm though to read this fresh approach in *The Listener*, which gives Lord Ashby in full. Someone should send a copy to Daithi O Conaill; it might stop him wasting his time. It might, too, mean an end to the mourning.

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IN recommending you to get *The Listener*, I must warn you not to order it through Easons of Limerick. You are likely to be charged more than you would, for instance, pay at Easons in Dublin, or at their branch in Dunlaoghaire. They charge 1p more in Limerick for *The Times* (London). On inquiring why the extra penny, a young manager went away to make his own researches. Eventually, probably fuddled by such fuss, he came up with "I suppose it's because our wholesalers charge more". Let me assure him this is not so. I have confirmed the correct Limerick price at his Head Office. Easons in Limerick declines to stock the *Limerick Socialist*, preferring to fill its shelves with imported 'soft' pornography. Could it be that the profit

is greater?

What about the muck that Easons retails to the youth of Limerick? Do you hear me, Easons? Has the penny dropped?

As it's holiday time (for those few who can afford the prices of the hotels built at the taxpayers' expense by Bord Fianna Failte) I'll tell you my plans: I'm off to the United States to meet a comrade I haven't seen for a lifetime. We'll have a great deal to chew the fat over and I'll keep you posted. What will our first words be? Less trite, I hope, than Stanley's, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume". Yet, all America's Tom Stafford could find to say on meeting his very first Russian in space was: "Very, very happy to meet you". (Searching the deeps of memory, I find that a Lahinch, County Clare, farmer did better when pioneer airmen Capt. Pond and Lieut. Cesare Sabelli, on a first-ever flight from the U.S. to Rome, force-landed out of the sea-mist on his field. Said Pond: "Where are we?" and that farmer, accurate and respectful, replied, "You're in Clooneyoogan, sir".

My friend and I will have shared regrets; of course, he is in much worse shape than I am: *His* nephew is Senator Brian Lenihan. How low can you get! Believe me, he has my deepest sympathy and, on your behalf, I'll show it! But you'll probably be hearing from me before I go. Meanwhile, *por favor*, help your own paper and no more buying of porn., especially at EASONS.

## THE REPUBLICAN DREAM

### MYTH OF THE BACKLASH

*Many people were now convinced that a Protestant backlash, as such, did not exist, and that it had to be used in shriller and shriller terms in recent weeks because the Unionist backwoodsmen are worried by the tide of events.*

*He said that the reasons for this belief were fourfold: 1, no organisation comparable to the I.R.A. existed on the Unionist side; 2, there was not a tradition among Northern Protestants for centrally-controlled guerrilla action on a nationwide scale (their talents lay in the directions of orthodox business and the professions. In strictly sectarian terms a Catholic football team would, generally, beat a Protestant one); 3, the abolition of the B Special Constabulary was a blow to their pride and fighting resources which the U.D.R. could not compensate for. The latter was controlled by the British Army and was unlikely to be available in backlash conditions; 4, the events in Belfast in August, 1969, which were frequently referred to as a backlash, showed the hollowness of the threat.*

(Address to the Wolfe Tone Society by Uinseann Mac Eoin, "Irish Times", 24/2/72).

### LIMERICK GRAFFITI

Seen on the wall of a Limerick Hotel:

IT IS NOT TRUE THAT GOD IS DEAD OR THAT HE DOES NOT LOVE THE POOR – HE IS JUST ABSENT – MINDED.

The following was written underneath in different handwriting:

BUT THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY – MARY IS PREGNANT AGAIN.

### HELD OVER

We regret that owing to pressure of space the seventh part of "The Parish Pump and "A Reply to Tom Morris" have been held over until next month.

# HELEN BUCKLEY'S AMERICA

## THE LIMERICK PRESS AND CHICAGO

### Part Two

THE inaugural dinner of the Chicago Limerickmen's Benevolent and Social Association was held in March 1971. The event was to prove a traumatic one for the "Limerick Leader" and for Helen Buckley, the journalist chosen by the paper to cover the function. As a result of two reports, published in the "Leader" on March 20th and 27th, 1971, the trip proved to be the first—and last—time the paper was invited to send a representative to wine and dine with the Chicago exiles.

The choice of Miss Buckley seemed logical enough at the time and few people expected her to go astray in the "Windy City". As Leisure Page correspondent she had already covered many social events and, as a daughter of one of the owners of the *Leader*, she appeared to have all the necessary attributes and confidence to fulfil her far-away assignment.

In her first article Helen Buckley gave an account of her plane journey out and described the dinner and the people who attended it. But it was her second report, during which she went on to give her impressions of American life, that caused most of the distress among the hyper-sensitive Limerick men in Chicago. Miss Buckley disclosed her hand in the opening sentence of her second article, appropriately titled "Here's Uncle Sam—Warts and All":

*At the outset I admit that I am biased against America. I am one of those who has missed the mystique of the great nation (that is if anything in that blatant country could be described in such exotic terms) or so I am told by the converted. Whether it is my unwillingness to accept the perennial supremacy of the big package over the small one. . . I don't know. But enclosed space for the sheer sake of it gives me inverted claustrophobia. . . I hate crowds, deluges of rudeness, the inability to walk safely where one wants to, and the necessity of having guards on every subway carriage.*

If this introduction wasn't enough to raise Irish-American hackles Miss Buckley went on to flush out a few more flaws in the "American Dream":

*America does of course have two alleviating strains in the sphere of living: its hallowed opportunity tag and its advance plumbing and garbage systems!....since for a long time American cultural thought was centred in bathrooms I cannot, to be fair, see them losing their sway in (this)....area.*

But worse was to follow. Also on the visit to Chicago was Councillor Rory Liddy, the Mayor of Limerick. An invitation to a Rotary luncheon provided the *Leader* reporter with an opportunity of contrasting the Mayor's quiet, business-like approach with the loud, ritualistic display of the Americans:

*It is hard to either define broadly or understand thoroughly the American character. One of the few things one can say about it with conviction is that it is a product of an environment which sprang up too quickly from wilderness to super modernity and is totally devoid of background. It is in this search for a vestige of background or a substitute for it that Americans tend to indulge in inane regalia, bumptious ceremonial and extrovert extremities. A good example of the latter occurred at a normal weekly Rotary luncheon I attended in America. The talking, chanting, praying and singing which went on in front of the ever-present American flag was, with the accompaning heart-clasped hands during the ceremony, very reminiscent of filmed African Zulu rites. The Mayor of Limerick, with his concise words to the point, stood out amongst a multitude of guffawing, purile males.*

And with this persuasive boy-scout, All-American spirit abroad, it was perhaps predictable that the great bogey, Communism, would appear on the scene. But once again Miss Buckley proved to be immune to this infectious bug. She stated:

*Another characteristic peculiar to the American public is*

*their hysterical attitude towards Communism. Their interpretation of the word goes further than ours to embrace any tendencies towards radicalism or watered-down socialism or anyone with vaguely leftist tendencies. In America it is either orthodox living or "Commie" behaviour: No beliefs, convictions or practices are allowed in between.*

After commenting on the contrast between the collective rudeness and individual politeness, Helen Buckley went on to make a brief examination of the state of the Catholic religion in America. The highlight of this section was her description of a visit to a convent situated in a comfortable, luxurious three-floored apartment, complete with the inevitable freezers, television room, lounges, study and work rooms and facilities for entertaining visitors, including guest bedrooms. And the Leisure Page correspondent also found room to slip in some critical comments on American fashions, as a parting shot at the women in the "Land of the Free":

*I consider that American women are some of the sloppiest, tasteless, artificial-looking females in the universe. They adopt fashion lines which are exotic in quality to everyone except themselves. Modern European guidelines would seem to be eschewed by them both in clothes and in beauty-parlours, where the bouffant hairstyles, fashionable in Europe about eight years ago, are still the rage.*

Miss Buckley's first article, titled "Our Chicagonans", took a less critical look at the exiled Limerickmen. The article itself could have been accurately sub-titled: "Heel-less in Chicago". As a result of a forced plane landing at Montreal, she lost the heel of one of her boots and devoted much of her article to describing the inconvenience caused by this accident. This loss caused Miss Buckley to miss the visit by Mayor Liddy and his wife to the City Hall to meet Mayor Richard Daley. The reactionary and corrupt Daley was described as "charming and hospitable" by the visiting party. Daley, however, did not attend the Limerickmen's dinner on the same evening, as he probably had something better to do.

Helen Buckley has left a useful record of the bizarre and almost incredible dinner spectacle:

*The march into the first dinner....is worth recording. The top table guests walked in order according to their seat placement accompanied by the music of the Shannon Rovers Pipe Band...Then the band played "The Soldiers Song" and "The Star-Spangled Banner". There were Irish and American flags, green and gold serviettes, waitresses almost resembling bunny girls, in part green and white uniforms, an enormous green drape covering the top table, and the 440 guests. The menu, which resembled in design one of Picasso's earlier works, was provided by Pan-Am and represented the colours of the flags of each country to which Pan-Am flew.*

The attendance included the Limerick-born bishop, Joseph Whelan, formerly of Owerri and then lecturing at a university at Pittsburg. Also present were Joe and Tom English, brothers of the well-known "Crooked Councillor", Michael English, from Hospital.

After publication of the second article the fur began to fly as letters and telephone calls began to pour in from Chicago. Eddie Stack, President of the Chicago Limerickmen's Association, called to see Brendan Halligan, editor of the *Leader*, on his next visit to Limerick and complained bitterly over the lack of editorial control over Miss Buckley's writings on America. Among the letters was one dated April 7th, 1971, from Eamon O'Malley (signing himself "A Decent American Citizen") to Helen Buckley or Editor-in-Chief, *Limerick Leader*. It stated:

*After reading a copy of your Limerick Leader newspaper edition, dated Saturday, March 27th, 1971 (which was shown to me by a dear Irish friend of mine), it shocked me to no end to think that there are still some biased people such as yourself, who had the gall to write such a degenerate article about our country. You must have arrived in this country with a big chip on your shoulder. To start off your article with a*

*caricature of a horrible looking beast with the stars and stripes strewn across its face with warts and all only means that even prior to you arriving in this country, your warped mind, or should I say feeble-minded image of Uncle Sam, could only mean that you've been out of an institution long enough.*

Another letter written by Alex Sullivan of the South West News Service, Illinois, to Tom Tobin, then editor of the *Limerick Weekly Echo*, stated:

*My personal opinion of Miss Buckley's attempt to present and describe life in the U.S.A. was simply one of contempt, lack of knowledge and understanding of this great country. It is hard for me to comprehend an Irish Colleen being so vindictive and frustrated; particularly so when she writes from the city I like to think is very important in my life—"The Great City of Limerick",*

But despite all the protests, Helen Buckley, being the boss's daughter, lived to fight another day. Arthur Quinlan, editor of the "*Leader's*" rival, the "*Limerick Weekly Echo*," saw and seized the opportunity of getting "inside" his competitor on the Chicago run. So each year since he has diligently travelled to that city to report on the annual beano of the exiles. It is rarely the *Echo* gets a chance to outshine the *Leader* and Quinlan has certainly made the most of his paper's good fortune. And the *Leader* has not published any more anti-American articles since Helen Buckley returned from her memorable trip to Chicago in March 1971.

(Concluded).

## A MARCH

The posters on the hoardings said, "March: The Right to Work". Now since nobody seems to have any immediate, or longterm answer to unemployment except revolution, and since revolution does not appear imminent, the protest march, the old standby, seemed worthwhile. So at 3.30, myself and my son turned up at the Garden of Remembrance (a memorial to chauvinistic nationalists and Fianna Fail capitalists).

They were all there: about 30 marchers, six squad cars of gardai and a Black Maria. The marchers were a mixed band: 2 young housewives with go-cars, 8 teenage girls and the hardcore — 20 young men, half of whom were bravely trying to grow mustaches and beards. However, what we lacked in manpower we made up in red flags, red banners and red armbands. A handout told me that the march was organised by the Workers League of Ireland, and when I enquired I was told that they were Trotskyites. I can admire some of the lucid prose of Trotsky but I'm mildly skeptical of Trotskyites. However, the young men I spoke to seemed like typical Dublin working lads and I fell in behind a banner proclaiming that I was a young socialist, which unfortunately I no longer am. However, the son (aged 5), who was sucking an icepop, would surely qualify.

As we marched down O'Connell St., a young man on a loud-hailer shouted slogans to which we were to reply: "Coalition Government Out", "National Wage Agreement Out", "Labour Government" ... Confusion reigned here in place of the automatic response. We were expected to say "In", but I kept thinking of Stevie Coughlan and said nothing, and judging from the confused response, others had similar thoughts. The slogan shouter got the message and dropped that one.

The expressions on the faces of the onlookers were interesting. A priest, worried by the colour, went away satisfied when he had counted the number. The driver of a red Mercedes looked as if he wished the car was taxed for driving over people. A garda with glazed eyes swung his baton convulsively. Some laughed. A few refused the handouts. Some looked on with interest, many without hostility. A few disagreed with "Unemployment" and they shouted "Out".

I swung out on the return, at the corner of Wolfe Tone St. The young socialist had eaten his icepop and I am getting too old for the inevitable rhetorical speeches. In time, "Venceremos".

## Opening the Gate

BY JOHN CASEY

The unemployment figure is over 100,000; factories are closing; the employed, those of the lower middleclass and the working class, are finding it difficult to buy the necessities (the upper middle class are winning and driving magnificent cars as usual); the majority of farmers are not happy and fear the future; school leavers cannot get work and the old safety valve of emigration is closed. The cause is the tottering state of world capitalism. And since we, led by Lemass and the Fianna Fail capitalists, decided to take up abode like a flea on the rump of world capitalism, we are in trouble. When the dog gets itchy the flea on the rump often gets the first belt.

The people are looking for culprits and they are there: three capitalist conservative parties (Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour). For over 50 years they have coned the people, insulted the intelligence of the nation, bribed and bullied their way with dole and threats. The people are tired; they have heard it all before: "Tighten your belts for the good of the nation"; "Blessed are the poor"; "We're doing our best", which undoubtedly they are for themselves and the establishment.

The three parties have consistently (two of them openly the other indirectly) always supported the status quo. They have been backed in this by the powerful Roman Catholic Church which in controlling education brainwashed successive generations — preaching obedience, fostering ignorance, inculcating acceptance of hierarchical structures in religious and temporal spheres. That day is fortunately fast going. The people are getting tired of the old order. They are asking questions. They want answers. They will no longer accept sops such as the 50p weekly increase in children's allowance as an answer.

Never before was it more important for socialists to come together. In the thirties and fifties the capitalist system was accepted, by the overwhelming majority, as the only possibly system. Only a small group, visionaries and revolutionaries saw the rat. Now things are different: an increasing number of people — intellectuals, workers, liberals, teachers — have pulled back the veil and seen the face of a dying whore.

It is therefore important for left-wing people to come together, sink their differences and work together on common issues. Obvious issues of solidarity are unemployment, the natural resources and blanket opposition to the capitalist parties and their minions.

In a short time the professional parasites will be looking for return stints in the Dail. No socialist can believe that a parliament is anything but a tool of the power elite but it is ridiculous at the same time to ignore it, to stick one's head in a boghole on election day (the attitude of the Provisionals) and hand power to the gombeen men. That's what they want and they'll laugh all the way to their Ministerial Mercedes. It is necessary for the socialists — all parties, groups, freewheelers — to come together and choose committed people. They are obvious obstacles: personality clashes, doctrinal differences, the prima donnas. But it is a measure of the sincerity of people and parties to co-operate.

Limerick is lucky. Limerick the city devided and scorned for its backwardness, voted Kemmy on to the Corporation. The Dublin intelligentsia couldn't believe it. They watched to see if he would be sucked in by the system. They said he would; he wasn't. He maintained his independent socialist stand and continued his fight for the people. Limerick can take it a step forward and send Kemmy to the Dail, silencing forever charges of clerical domination and of electing buffoon politicians. Kemmy will not change; the Dail will not suck him in; his commitment is a genuine one, rooted in his origins, and in the people of Limerick.

Other constituencies are not as lucky. But in Dublin there are individuals whose dedication and selflessness is unquestioned. And throughout the country there are "village Hampdens". Some of them have blushed and some have never blushed, either way the time is coming for them to be seen.



## EASTER SUNDAY 1916

At 5 a.m. on Easter Sunday 1916, all four military barracks were alerted and the garrisons quickly moved into defensive positions on the perimeter of the city. Corbally Bridge and the railway bridge across the Shannon at the Longpavement were put under military guard. Sarsfield Bridge was barricaded, the troops being billeted in the nearby Turkish Baths. Sentries manning the ramparts of King John's Castle controlled Thomond Bridge. The Roxboro Road was barricaded beyond the railway bridge, the troops being camped in tents. The Tipperary and Kilmallock Roads were barricaded at their junction near St. Laurence cemetery; the troops being billeted in the Munster Fair Tavern and in the R.I.C. barrack nearby. The telephone exchange at Number Six, Upper Cecil St., was taken over by signallers from the Royal Army Service Corps, who listened to all calls and allowed no calls out of the city. Armed R.I.C. sentries stood on guard outside every R.I.C. barrack in the city and outside the city.

A party of six men travelling on a jaunting car on a day's excursion to Killaloe, were halted by a combined force of R.I.C. and military at Birdhill, eleven miles from the city on the Dublin road. They were questioned and allowed to continue their journey. This halt was at 9 a.m. on Easter Sunday morning. They returned to Limerick that night, passing again through Birdhill. They were singing like nightingales, but were not challenged.

Birdhill is near the Shannon on the Limerick/Tipperary border. At vantage points near Birdhill a whole sweep of countryside from the Shannon to Newport several miles away, can be kept under observation. The area is a rough plain of bog and swamp. Any movement of armed men on the distant Newport road could be seen from Birdhill. Beyond the Newport road was more bog and swamp, drained by the Newport and Bilbou rivers.

At 11 a.m. on Easter Sunday morning a party of twelve Volunteers on bicycles coming towards the city, halted at Rosbrien Crossroads two miles from the city. Two of the men had some kind of rifles and four of them had shotguns. The other six men were armed with hayforks and hedge slashers. On being shown the cancellation notice in the Sunday Independent and informed of the military disposition in the city, they rightly accepted an advice to return to their homes and disperse. As they were not wearing uniforms it was easy to follow that advice without attracting further attention. No one may doubt that those were brave men, nor can anyone doubt that it was an act of criminal lunacy to order that handful of men to attack almost two thousand British troops who were then stationed in the city.

From these events it can be seen that Colonel Sir Anthony Weldon the British commander in the Limerick area was well informed about the strength of the militant force arrayed against him. He took the correct and commendable course to safeguard his position and the lives of the citizens and Volunteers alike. A humane and kindly man he saw nothing but comedy and ridicule in attacking and rounding up a handful of men armed with obsolete guns and agricultural implements. He may have been in possession of some as yet undisclosed information concerning this semblance of rebellion. The thought will also occur that the whole 1916 affair was meant to appear as a semblance of rebellion to appease the American-Irish organisations which had lavishly supported the Volunteer movement for three years since 1913. It is reasonable to suppose that the Americans wanted more for their money than mere oratory, parades and route marches. The historian must not allow posterity to be deceived by published verbosity but ask – how much information has been suppressed, withheld or destroyed? All the foregoing

# The Fourth Siege of Limerick

events occurred a day before a shot was fired in Dublin city.

Following the unconditional surrender in Dublin, Sir Anthony demanded the surrender of all arms held by the Volunteers in Limerick. Because of their many parades and route marches in uniform, the names and addresses of all volunteers were known to the police, as well as details of the weapons in their possession. On this account the men had no option but to surrender their guns which eventually were removed to the New barrack and destroyed. Agricultural implements were not included in this surrender demand.

## THE RISING IN DUBLIN

Meanwhile events in Dublin followed their predestined course. As two Limerick men were executed for their part in the rebellion, it is pertinent to this story to examine the circumstances which led to their deaths.

All published sources are agreed that Pearse deceived his superior officer McNeill, that he defied his superior officer and usurped his authority; and that contrary to expressed orders he indulged in the semblance of rebellion.

It is also well publicised that Connolly, a Scotsman of eight years residence in Dublin, was held prisoner for two days. Nothing is known as to what happened to him during those two days but wild surmise. It is patriotically suggested that Connolly was prevailed upon, coerced or forced at gunpoint to join in the semblance of rebellion. If this wild surmise is accepted then it must also be accepted that on regaining his liberty he was free to divorce himself from the shotgun wedding and denounce his captors. As he did not withdraw, then it is rational to conclude that something more attractive than death by a firing squad was offered to this 48 years old Scotsman who had spent most of his life in Britain and the U.S.A. A less publicised but rational surmise was that it was spelled out to Connolly that no gory revolution was planned but a confrontation in force, a show of strength, to be followed by a parley with the opposing British commander and a capitulation on terms without firing a shot. This kind of frolic had the precedent of Grattan's Volunteers in 1779 to lend it verisimilitude. It also had the more recent and equally successful and relevant case of Carson's Ulster Volunteer Force of 1913 which, without firing a shot defied the British Government, caused a mutiny in the Curragh, and effectively postponed the Home Rule Bill into the Kathleen Mavourneen Class – "It may be for years and it may be forever".

Pearse, Connolly and other men occupied public buildings in untenable positions of defense. The absurdity of their positions would suggest to the trained military mind, that nothing serious was intended. Pearse's men were not to fire until Pearse gave the order to fire. Connolly's men were not to fire until Connolly gave the order.

The occupation of public buildings by armed men should have been investigated in the first place by the Dublin Metropolitan Police, instead, a British Military scouting party led by a Colonel arrived at the G.P.O. Contrary to expressed orders a volley was fired and a British soldier and two valuable horses were shot dead. As men were expendable and horses were not, the loss of the two horses was a serious matter.

It is of no consequence whether the dead soldier was a Lancer in all his finery or a Gordon Highlander wagging his kilt, nor does the number of dead matter. A British soldier was

killed in action, the circumstances of his death warranted a courtmartial and a firing squad. Pearse as a solicitor would know the law on the matter. Connolly as an ex-British soldier (1882-'1889) would have been aware of the military routine in such matters.

Tragic as those events were for the relatives of those slain in the rebellion, the event was not without a touch of comedy. It was the usual custom in that age, for people to gather in numbers at the bakeries on the Tuesday morning following a bank holiday. The poor came for the cheap end loaf of a batch of bread, while others came early because of lack of forethought they had neglected to obtain sufficient supplies on the previous Saturday. Because of the shooting of a British soldier and other events on Monday, the bakeries in Dublin were thronged around by masses of people looking for bread on Tuesday morning.

Boland's bakery was under siege by masses of starving citizens looking for bread and who would not be put off with cake, yet the small garrison of about thirty men compelled the starving multitude to go away.

The garrison was "continuously being sent on witless and futile patrols to discover the presence of the enemy". This is the only recorded case in Irish history, where Irish rebels had to search around to discover the presence of the British Army.

The rebellion had little impact on British public opinion. The British Foreign Secretary, Earl Grey of Falloden was enjoying a holiday at his country seat at Falloden, Northumberland. He was an amateur ornithologist and an

ardent bird watcher. While engaged in his hobby looking through binoculars at migratory and alien birds, he was informed in a most casual manner of the executions taking place in Dublin. Shocked by the news, he laid aside his binoculars and hurried south and across the Irish Sea. On his arrival in Dublin, he ordered an immediate halt to all further executions. He then returned to Falloden and taking up his glasses, resumed his study of migrant and alien birds. The British military command in Ireland was a separate military command, responsible only to the Foreign Secretary. The executions were the military method of restoring law and order when civil government was disrupted. The military would have acted in a similar manner in any other country held by the British. Under similar conditions of revolt any other government would have acted in a similar manner. During the then World War, the French military command decimated a whole regiment of the French Army for mutiny. Every tenth man was executed.

The Irish public were horrified by the death roll of innocent civilians. That some British soldiers were slain was of little consequence to the British as, even in death they are reputed to keep a stiff upper lip and not indulge in maudlin patriotics. The citizens of Dublin who had endured four days of famine, terror and death had little sympathy for the unfortunate Volunteers and none for their leaders. They with their knowledge of contemporary events regarded the leaders as political adventurers who had gambled and lost.

(to be continued).

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## THE MAYORALTY

Your article entitled "The Bookie's Runner" was priceless and I wish to compliment you on the very thorough way you presented the story. The Mayorality of Limerick has now descended to the position occupied by the Hunchback of Notre Dame, and he was not a very honourable man. The so-called Labour Party in Limerick must be the shabbiest in all Ireland; its public representatives are lower than an ordinary rat; they are more likened to a bunker-rat because he crawls on his belly.

No doubt when Sean MacBride disbanded his Clann na Poblachta Party he flooded the Limerick political scene with a glut of would-be politicians looking around for a flag. The kind of crest to wear was of little concern to those seeking admission to another party; all they were interested in was room at the top.

The vacuum created by the death of Michael Keyes gave Mr. Coughlan his chance to obtain a seat in Dail Eireann and we all know the sordid story that then ensued. Steve now wishes to follow the course taken by Sir Anthony Esmonde in Wexford: the father pulls out with a substantial pension and the son inters with a substantial salary. The same will also be the case with Brendan Corish in Wexford as Phil, the son, waits in the wings to slip in for the third generation of Dail deputies in the town of the "yellow-bellies".

It would appear that politics in Ireland are geared for a peasant people because if the electorate was mature enough it would make sure that those it elects to represent it at local and national level would be capable of getting away from the village pump mentality. One would also expect the politicians aspiring to public office to present their cases in an intelligent and realistic way.

While I would like to support the statement of Councillor Thady Coughlan concerning the unemployed people, there is little chance of the son succeeding where his father failed. The list of things waiting to be done is almost endless and perhaps Thady might also address himself to some of the following items, after he has solved the unemployment problem:

- \* The need to retain the Limerick Regional Hospital as a regional hospital when the Cork Wilton Hospital is built.
- \* The need to establish a Regional Technical College in Limerick (after all, Letterkenny, 'population seven thousand' has one).
- \* The proposal to have some Government Department transferred to Limerick.

- \* The delay in establishing a local radio station like "Corkabout", such as is now planned for Waterford.
- \* The need for a proper bus depot in Limerick for long-distance travellers, such as those in Dublin, Cork and Waterford.
- \* The need for a through train from Limerick to Dublin in the afternoon. At present Limerick has only one through train to Dublin in the day; Cork has seven; Galway has four and even Westport is served by three.
- \* The delay in getting all the derelict sites in the city cleared and houses built on them instead of sending people miles out of the city and causing them the inconvenience and the bus and motoring costs.
- \* The delay in getting the lights restored on Sarsfield Bridge.
- \* The need to re-open the Limerick Sanatorium in order to save local people journeys to Cork and Galway to visit sick relatives. (Travelling vouchers are provided in some cases but no provisions are made for getting meals in these cities). But for the politicians involved in securing the vouchers the closing of the Sanatorium may have been a blessing in disguise, as the voucher-getting activity will have its rewards on polling day).

Looking back over fifty-five years ago, the Mayorality went a-begging. It was a hot seat then, of course, as the two previous Mayors had been murdered. There were no whispers behind closed doors on that occasion. Now, however, the job is as safe as a pigeon's nest in the tower of St. John's Cathedral. It is also a lucrative post - so why not have a go? After all, no qualifications are required, only to be able to strike such as is the case at the Cahirmee Horse Fair.

I am sure that a man in Alderman Coughlan's profession knows quite a lot about horses as he does about Jews and Maoists. But Steve must not have the same qualifications as O'Leary, Keating, Tully, Treacy and the rest as he failed even to get a Parliamentary Secretaryship. What went wrong, Steve? Your ultra-Catholic activities in the City of the Violated Treaty failed to impress Brendan and Liam. We know that Christ turned the horse-traders out of the temple: had he been in Limerick before the recent Mayoral election, he would have had plenty of use for his whip on the local hypocrites.

Steve and company have been in power for almost two and a half years and we have more poor people with us than ever before. Thady Coughlan is now being groomed to perpetuate this system.

Patrick Clancy

## ASSAULT AT GARDA STATION

On Saturday July 5th, Michael Murphy, a former member of (Official) Sinn Fein, was arrested at his home at about 8.10 a.m. by Detective/Sergeant Martin Corbett and Detective/Sergeant Michael Browne, who were accompanied by a number of uniformed Gardai. The arrest was made under the provisions of the Offences Against the State Act, which gives power to the police to detain a person without charge for up to 48 hours.

After being taken to Edward Street Garda Station, Michael Murphy was informed by Det./Sgt. Corbett that a number of detectives were on their way from Cork to interview him. Over 15 hours later, at 11.25 p.m., he was released in a badly battered and shocked state.

The leading part in the interrogation of Michael Murphy was taken by one of the detectives from Cork named J.P. McDermott, who continuously punched Murphy throughout the questioning and, at one stage, beat him viciously about the body and arms with a length of wood. The attack with the timber took place after Michael Murphy had complained about the treatment he was receiving and had stated his intention of notifying the press and local public representatives.

Other detectives believed to be O'Dwyer, Cloonan, Geraghty, and Butler took part in the interrogation but did not participate in the beating of Michael Murphy. All through, the questioning, Murphy maintained his innocence of the allegations made against him. These questions concerned a recent murder in Cork and a number of robberies. At no stage was any proof furnished to implicate Michael Murphy with any of these events.

During the interrogation, the fact dawned on some of the detectives that they had picked up the wrong man and a hurried conference took place outside the door of the room in which Michael Murphy was held. An argument developed between the Special Branch and local Detectives, during which a voice could be heard saying "it is all a waste of time". Eventually, at 11.25 p.m., Michael Murphy was released in a

The Limerick Socialist Organisation does not support the policies and activities of any of the Republican groups, especially their undemocratic attitudes to the Northern Ireland question. The Organisation supports the right of the Northern Ireland Protestant Community to opt for the state of its own choosing and also supports the right of the Northern Ireland Catholic community to full civil rights. Regarding Southern Ireland, the Organisation supports the right of full civil and human rights for all people, including Republicans, and believes that no group, including the police force, should be above the law.

physically and mentally exhausted condition, brought about by the beatings, continuous questioning and the fact that he had been kept in a standing position for most of the fifteen hours.

A statement issued by Michael Murphy on his period in custody was published in full (apart from the names of the detectives involved) in the *Limerick Leader* on July 12th. Despite the fact that over three weeks have passed since the publication of this statement, the police headquarters in Limerick has failed to issue any form of a denial or to comment on the press story. This, of course, is not the first time that an innocent person has been brutally beaten by the police in Limerick – and it is unlikely to be the last time. It is also unlikely that Michael Murphy will get any satisfaction through the public courts or that the police will be forced to apologise and compensate him for the punishment suffered by him.

The only long-term proposals that should be publicly pushed at this stage is for workers to demand, through their trade unions and the political parties, that an independent and impartial body be set up by the Government to monitor the performance of the police and with the necessary power to investigate abuses of police authority. This proposal offers little prospect of redress to Michael Murphy and other victims of police brutality but it is the only realistic one to support in the present circumstances.

## A 'liberal' Irish-American

In the June edition of the "Limerick Socialist" Shane Connaughton replied to an earlier article by Con Houlihan on the Irish-American politician Paul O'Dwyer. Among the points made by Shane Connaughton in support of O'Dwyer's Northern Ireland policy were his anti-Vietnam war attitude and pro-Jewish stance in relation to the setting up of Palestine.

It is a fact that Paul O'Dwyer wised up earlier on Vietnam than some of his fellow Democratic liberals, including McGovern and the Kennedys. But his all-purpose liberal analysis is not quite so consistent when it comes to Israel. Paul O'Dwyer has never been a vigorous supporter of the human and democratic rights of the Arab refugees in Israel. The treatment of these people has long been a scandal but O'Dwyer has remained uncharacteristically silent on this issue, as he has on the many Zionist excesses. But, then, in this as well as in other questions votes are involved and there are obviously a lot more Zionists in America than Orangemen.

Shane Connaughton's reference to the Orangemen "constantly looking over their shoulders to a mythical London" and to their "dream of the Queen across the water" do little to clarify the present Northern Ireland conflict. Partition was not brought about by a mythical London or by a Queen; it was based on the economic realities of the Northern Ireland state. As the North's economy was integrated on a free trade arrangement with Britain, the Sinn Fein policy of tariff walls and protectionism would have spelt economic disaster for the Northern Ireland. The Northern Protestant people were having none of this, and any other advantages in joining the Southern sectarian state cut little ice with them.

While bigotry has played a big part in Northern Ireland society, this bigotry has been by no means one-sided. But there are few people who now believe that it is only religious bigotry that has maintained the union with Britain. For 70 years the Protestants have resisted all attempts to force them into a "united" Ireland, and their opposition is now stronger than ever despite the Provo campaign.

Any socialist understanding of Irish history requires an objective look at the economic developments which, having given rise to the Southern national movement, set the limits on how far that movement could go. With the collapse of the protectionist system in the late fifties, the Southern capitalist class was left with no other choice but to integrate with the British and the world capitalist market.

This development has undermined the religious, reactionary, claustrophobic and Gaelic revivalist set-up that predominated in the South from 1922 to the early sixties and has laid the basis for the liberalisation that has been proceeding steadily for the past decade. Nationalism has not been a source of democracy in Southern Ireland. Liberalism has not resulted from the growth of progressive nationalist forces. Down to the early sixties Sinn Fein was closely bound up with reactionary social Catholicism. The liberal changes have obviously been caused by the impact of international capitalism on Southern society.

The nationalist left activists, instead of basing their policies on the industrialisation of the South, are trying to preserve the old national-capitalist set-up and, like Paul O'Dwyer, are merely providing a left cover for the Provo attempt to coerce the North. But the Northern Protestant community has remained unmoved and is unlikely to be forced into a 32-County state against its collective will – in spite of all the Paul O'Dwyers in the world.